

**SFMOMA**  
**on the go**

**MoAD**  
Museum of the African Diaspora

For Immediate Release  
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**Portraits and Other Likenesses from SFMOMA  
on view at the Museum of the African Diaspora  
May 8–October 11, 2015**



SAN FRANCISCO—Jointly organized by the Museum of the African Diaspora (MoAD) and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA), Portraits and Other Likenesses from SFMOMA brings together approximately 50 carefully selected artworks that explore the dynamic role of portraiture in modern and contemporary art. On view from May 8 to October 11, 2015, this landmark collaboration will activate numerous spaces in the newly renovated MoAD, and will be the most extensive exhibition in MoAD's 10-year history.

“Since reopening last year, MoAD has been committed to delivering vibrant, relevant exhibitions in our reimagined space,” said MoAD executive director Linda Harrison. “We were thrilled to be asked by SFMOMA to collaborate on developing a show of work by artists from the African Diaspora and Latin America, and I’m grateful for the creative hard work of cocurators Caitlin Haskell and Lizzetta LeFalle-Collins. Our collaboration with SFMOMA continues MoAD’s transformation as a serious cultural player in San Francisco.”

“The closure of SFMOMA for expansion construction has provided us a tremendous opportunity to partner with many of our peer cultural institutions, like MoAD,” said Neal Benezra, director of SFMOMA. “We are delighted to share these collaborations with our community, and look forward to continuing to build on this strong foundation of relationships when our museum reopens next spring.”

### **Exhibition Overview**

Featuring works ranging in date from the 1920s to the present, *Portraits and Other Likenesses* demonstrates how artists interested in issues of identity have negotiated African, European, and American visual-cultural forms to broaden our understanding of what it means to make a portrait. Placing historical artworks in dialogue with pieces created and acquired more recently, the exhibition examines how portraiture has evolved from a form of personal identification to a genre as invested in fiction, subversion, stereotype, and fantasy as it is in the description of physical traits.

The selection of works in *Portraits and Other Likenesses*—more than half of them displayed for the first time as part of SFMOMA’s collection—encompasses paintings, sculptures, photographs, and media art. The exhibition additionally includes a newly commissioned multimedia installation by Mickalene Thomas, *Between Ourselves Together* (2015), which places her large-scale photograph from SFMOMA’s collection—*Sista Sista Lady Blue* (2007)—alongside related photographs and a film in an immersive setting designed to evoke a 1970s living room.

Cocurated by LeFalle-Collins, guest curator for MoAD, and Haskell, assistant curator of painting and sculpture at SFMOMA, the exhibition also will include key pieces by Romare Bearden, Njideka Akunyili Crosby, David Hammons, Mildred Howard, Consuelo Kanaga, Wifredo Lam, Glenn Ligon, Nicole Miller, Chris Ofili, Lorna Simpson, Joaquin Trujillo, Kara Walker, Carrie Mae Weems and Fred Wilson, among others.

### **Highlights of Portraits and Other Likenesses include:**

- **Romare Bearden, *Three Men (1966–67)*:** Created during the civil rights era, this large-scale collage, or “montage painting,” offers an outstanding example of the

technique for which Bearden is best known. Layers of newspaper, magazine clippings, and colored paper are joined together to compose an engrossing tableau.

- **Kara Walker, Daylights (after M.B.) (2011):** Depicting the physical and cultural displacement that accompanied the Great Migration, this drawing presents a biting critique of the violence and social disruption associated with diaspora.
- **Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, Sapphires Under Cotton (2013):** Yiadom-Boakye's portraits are filled with seemingly familiar faces, yet her subjects are drawn entirely from imagination. A stunning example of her approach, this painting eschews an actual sitter, adopting a traditional European portrait style but expanding upon the genre by including a black subject.
- **Glenn Ligon, Narratives (1993):** Adapting the antiquated format of 19th-century slave narratives, Ligon's Narratives comments on his own life and experiences as a gay black man in the 1990s.
- **Sargent Johnson, Forever Free (1933):** An allegory of the promise and realization of freedom, this sculpture was on view in SFMOMA's inaugural exhibition in January 1935. It ultimately became one of the artist's signature works and inspired a new generation of black artists.
- **Njideka Akunyili Crosby, Wedding Portrait (2012):** This vibrant collage depicts a moment from the artist's wedding day. Kneeling in traditional Nigerian clothing before her white, American husband-to-be, Akunyili Crosby offers a juxtaposition of diverse cultures, creating a liminal space that illuminates the ambiguity of her personal experiences.

Portraits and Other Likenesses is part of SFMOMA's extensive off-site programming while its building is temporarily closed for [expansion](#) construction. Through spring 2016 SFMOMA is [On the Go](#), presenting a dynamic slate of jointly organized and traveling exhibitions, public art displays and site-specific installations, and newly created education programs throughout the Bay Area and beyond.

### **Related Programs**

Friday, May 8, 7 p.m.

Artist Mickalene Thomas in conversation with Derek Conrad Murray, assistant professor for the history of art and visual culture at the University of California, Santa Cruz, in her salon installation *Between Ourselves Again*; doors open at 6pm for a pre-program reception.

Saturday, May 9, 2 p.m.

In-gallery conversations with exhibiting artists Njideka Akunyili Crosby, Mildred Howard, Nicole Miller, and Joaquin Trujillo, followed by a panel in which the artists will be joined by exhibition curators Lizzetta LeFalle-Collins and Caitlin Haskell. A public reception will follow.

Saturday, May 9, 4:30 p.m.

Screening of Mickalene Thomas's documentary portrait of her mother, Sandra Bush, *Happy Birthday to a Beautiful Woman* (55 min.) alongside her installation *Between Ourselves Again*. Thomas will introduce the film and join an audience Q&A led by Frank Smigiel, SFMOMA associate curator of performance and film.

Tickets available at [sfmoma.org](http://sfmoma.org) and [moad.org](http://moad.org).

### **Exhibition Organization**

*Portraits and Other Likenesses* from SFMOMA is jointly organized by the Museum of the African Diaspora and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. The exhibition is made possible by major support from The James Irvine Foundation. Generous support is provided by The Bernard Osher Foundation and the George F. Jewett Foundation. Additional support is provided by Concepción and Irwin Federman and the Yerba Buena Community Benefit District.

### **About the Museum of the African Diaspora (MoAD)**

The Museum of the African Diaspora (MoAD), a Smithsonian Institution affiliate, is an arts and cultural organization dedicated to preserving the stories of our common African heritage and sharing those stories with audiences from around the world. Situated in the heart of the Yerba Buena Arts District in San Francisco, MoAD is actively engaged in building a community that inspires, educates, and connects people of all ages and backgrounds. MoAD seeks to build a deeper understanding of the African Diaspora through art, programs, and events that cultivate wonder and excitement about the ways in which our personal histories are connected. As a nonprofit organization, the museum's operations and programs are supported by grants and contributions from public and private sources.

To learn more and to support MoAD, visit [moad.org](http://moad.org).

### **About the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art**

Founded in 1935 as the first West Coast museum devoted to modern and contemporary art, SFMOMA is currently undergoing a major, Snøhetta-designed [expansion project](#) to open in 2016 that will significantly enhance gallery, education, and public spaces,

enabling the museum to better showcase more of its expanded permanent collection. While the museum is temporarily closed, SFMOMA is [On the Go](#) with an extensive array of off-site programming across the Bay Area and beyond.

Visit [sfmoma.org](http://sfmoma.org) or call 415.357.4000 for more information.

### **Visiting Portraits and Other Likenesses**

Museum of the African Diaspora  
685 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94105  
For museum hours and admission, please visit [moad.org](http://moad.org).

### **Media Contacts**

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Image credit:

Njideka Akunyili Crosby, Wedding Portrait, 2012; acrylic, pastel, colored pencil, marble dust, fabric, and electrostatic transfers; 63 x 54 in. (160.02 x 137.16 cm); Collection SFMOMA, purchase through a gift of Pamela Joyner in honor of Gary Garrels, Elise S. Haas Senior Curator of Painting and Sculpture; © Njideka Akunyili Crosby; photo: Don Ross